

## I'm Known by How I've Grown, Part 6 - 1 Corinthians 3:19-20 – July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014

- Today's teaching will be part six of a series I've titled, "I'm Known by How I've Grown."
- As we near the end of chapter 3, which we should complete next week, the Apostle Paul's corrective rebuke has taken a turn for the worse.
- By that I mean, the Holy Spirit has deemed it necessary for Paul to both rebuke them, and warn them concerning destroying God's church.

- Enter verses sixteen and seventeen, which as we saw last week, Paul warns them that if they destroy God's church, God will destroy them.
- I suppose you could say once the Christian's in Corinth got to this part of letter Paul by the Holy Spirit, would have their undivided attention.
- So much so, that they would have likely known exactly what was meant by God destroying them, such that it would be their untimely death.

- Sadly, when we get to chapter eleven, we see that some did die as a result of their inability to, "discern the Lord's body," at the Lord's table.
- It's important we understand that the Lord's body was another way to say the body of believers making up a church with Christ as the head.
- By understanding this we get a better picture of what was happening in this church, they were destroying the body not discerning the body.

One commentator explained it best this way, "...the Lord's body [is] a reference to the church family, and it was the lack of respect and love for the church family that caused the problems of selfishness among the Corinthian Christians. ...Evidently, among the Corinthian Christians, some experienced illness and some had even died as a result of God's corrective discipline. ... Apparently, a believer can sin to the point where God believes it is just best to bring them home, ...and if He sees fit to bring one of His children home, that is fine. We are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world: This makes it clear Paul knew none of the Corinthian Christians, even those who died as a result of God's corrective judgment, had lost their salvation.

- While I realize this intense passage of scripture may be difficult to wrap our minds around, it would behoove us to ask ourselves a question.
- Namely, am I in any way guilty of destroying the body, and if so what are the ways in which I may be knowingly or unknowingly doing this?
- Thankfully, in the remaining six verses of the chapter the Apostle Paul lists no less than three specific ways believers can destroy a church.

### 1<sup>st</sup> - I can destroy a church by being self-deceived (Verse 18)

- Here Paul says don't deceive yourself. Anyone fancying themselves wise by the standards of this age needs to become a fool to be wise.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> - I can destroy a church with my worldly wisdom (Verses 19-20)

(19) For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness"; (20) and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile."

- v19 Paul says the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight then he quotes Job 5:13 saying He catches the wise in their craftiness.
- v20 He then goes on to quote Psalm 94:11, speaking of their worldly wisdom, saying the Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.
- To me, this speaks to how a church can be destroyed by the crafty folly of worldly wisdom in all of its futility, and all the guile of being cool.

- When this worldliness gets into a church, it's only a matter of time until God's Word is out of the church, which is what destroys that church.
- Even before God's Word is replaced with the world, the worldly wisdom will water it down and render it moot, which will starve the sheep.
- As one aptly said, God's Word can be so watered down were it medicine it wouldn't heal anyone and were it poison it wouldn't kill anyone.

- Perhaps it's for this reason we need look no further as to why the church today is so feckless in changing the world. The world changed it.
- So much so one would be hard pressed to say that most in the church today are in but not of the world given that the world is in the church.
- I would suggest not only is the church destroyed by this worldliness, the lives of those Christians in that church will be destroyed as well.

- Let me hasten to say the Christian's eternal life is not at stake, rather, it's a Christian being blessed in this life and rewarded in eternal life.
- Perhaps better said, though I'm saved, the blessings this side of heaven, and the rewards when I get to heaven, will be destroyed by fire.
- One has explained it best this way, we are still saved in that it is not about our presence in heaven; rather, it's about our position in heaven.

- Actually, I believe that this is exactly wherein the problem lies, and here's why, our present lives on earth supersede eternal life in heaven.
- Let me explain, our temporal lives in the worldly present, are far more important and valuable than our eternal lives in the heavenly future.
- Thus, we deprive ourselves of both future rewards, and present blessings for the perceived satisfaction of the world's instant gratification.

- Studies dating as far back as the 1960's show that most children and adults will opt for things like one marshmallow now, than two later.
- This because the prefrontal cortex of our fallen minds perceives the satisfaction of instant gratification and as such overpowers the rational.
- You probably know where I'm going so here's the point when we live for eternity yet future we won't seek instant gratification in the present.

Allow me to quote from a treasured classic in my library, one for which I only paid twenty-five cents for at a 50% off sale from a used book store. It's titled, "A Thousand Thoughts for Funeral Occasions." While I am keenly aware that a book bearing such a title would never be found on any bestseller list, much within it's pages is as apropos as it is profound. Such is the case with an excerpt from a sermon titled "Other Worldliness" written by one Alexander Maclaren, who says, "There are few things that the average Christianity of this day needs more than that note of unworldliness, of belonging to another community than that in which our lot in the present is cast, which my text prescribes for us. We must speak the language of the land in which we dwell, but we should speak it with a foreign accent. ...You are the citizens of another community; therefore you are to work here worthily thereof."

"A Thousand Thoughts for Funeral Occasions." "Other Worldliness" by Alexander Maclaren - P.p. 308, 309

- In closing let me simply say, for Christians to whom the world is not our home this ought not be, we belong to another heavenly community.
- As foreigners, we should speak the language of this world with a foreign accent because our native tongue is that of a heavenly language.
- This of course presupposes we're fluent in the language of heaven, and living for heaven. If so, the things of earth will grow strangely dim.

**John 3:12 NIV** I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?